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INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
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RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0150
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 01 OF 02 KAMPALA 001381

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR S/GAC
DEPT FOR DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/08/2019
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [KCOR](#) [UG](#)
SUBJECT: UGANDA: DONORS NOT AMUSED AS ANTI-HOMOSEXUALITY
TRUMPS ANTI-CORRUPTION

REF: A. KAMPALA 01309
 [B.](#) KAMPALA 00985
 [C.](#) KAMPALA 00523
 [D.](#) KAMPALA 01096

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Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Aaron Sampson for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: During a December 1 meeting with U.S. EmbOffs, UN Special Envoy on AIDS in Africa Elizabeth Mataka criticized Ugandan leaders for trying to criminalize homosexuality instead of curbing rampant health sector corruption. Mataka traveled to Kampala to raise concerns about Uganda's draft anti-homosexuality bill (ref. A). Meanwhile, Sweden signaled it could cut \$50 million in HIV/AIDS assistance if the anti-homosexuality bill passes, and joined with the European Union in calling on Uganda to prosecute corrupt government officials. In response, Ethics Minister Nsaba Buturo, who oversees Uganda's anti-corruption organs, castigated foreign diplomats for publicly criticizing Uganda, and said donors opposed to the anti-homosexuality bill are free to withdraw funding. We do not believe President Museveni shares Buturo's dismissal of donor aid, and remain cognizant of local warnings that public condemnation by foreign donors is further emboldening the bill's proponents. End Summary.

Anti-Homosexuality Proponents Frustrate UN Envoy

[¶](#)2. (SBU) Special Envoy Mataka came to Uganda to register UN concerns about the draft anti-homosexuality bill and pending HIV/AIDS legislation that would criminalize the transmission of HIV. In a public statement at the end of her three-day visit, Mataka urged Uganda not to criminalize HIV transmission, to avoid further stigmatization of at-risk groups, and to ensure its response to HIV "is based on evidence, not ideology."

[¶](#)3. (C) During a meeting with PolOff, PEPFAR Coordinator, and CDC Country Director, Mataka linked dire shortages in antiretroviral drugs and the general mismanagement of Uganda's health sector to pervasive corruption. Major health sector corruption scandals involve the Uganda AIDS Commission (ref. B), the Global Fund (ref. C), the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) program (ref. D), and recent

revelations of more than 100 fully stocked and staffed "ghost" health centers. Mataka lamented that the anti-homosexuality bill is diverting attention away from the core issue.

¶4. (C) In addition to meeting with Ugandan civil society leaders opposed to the bill, Mataka met with outspoken anti-homosexual activist Pastor Martin Ssempa and the bill's author David Bahati. Mataka and her delegation described Ssempa's inability to differentiate between pedophilia and sex between consenting adults as "shocking". They reported Ssempa is convinced that individuals recruited by western homosexuals are preying on Ugandan children and that current laws covering rape, incest, and sexual abuse are insufficient. Ssempa maintained that adults cannot "consent" to homosexual relationships, and informed Mataka that both he and his wife are American citizens. Later in the day, Ssempa publicly urged President Museveni to support the anti-homosexuality bill, accused the U.K., the U.S., and France of intimidating Uganda with threats to cancel donor assistance, and said international donors have done nothing to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS.

¶5. (C) Mataka said the bill's sponsor, MP David Bahati, appeared amenable to softening some of the most offensive aspects of the legislation. However, she questioned whether Bahati is the main force behind the bill. Ethics Minister Nsaba Buturo, who is actively promoting the bill, canceled his meeting with Mataka, leaving Presidency Minister Beatrice Wabudeya as the senior-most Ugandan official on the Special Envoy's agenda. At the end of her meeting with the U.S. Mission, Mataka expressed doubts that she delivered her message on anti-homosexuality and HIV/AIDS to the right Ugandan leaders.

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Sweden Threatens to Withdraw Aid

¶6. (SBU) Local press has reported remarks by Swedish Development Minister Gunilla Carlsson indicating that Sweden will cut \$50 million in aid to Uganda's health sector if the anti-homosexuality bill becomes law. On December 3, a Swedish diplomat told PolOff that Sweden will likely sever its assistance, stating that the bill would undercut Sweden's HIV/AIDS prevention strategy for Uganda. The diplomat said the anti-homosexuality legislation constitutes a tipping point as Sweden is increasingly concerned about Uganda's apparent unwillingness to seriously address health sector corruption.

Minister Buturo's Standards of Civilization

¶7. (U) On December 2, the European Union and Swedish Ambassadors publicly urged Uganda to prosecute government officials accused of corruption (septel). Ethics and Integrity Minister Nsaba Buturo responded by castigating Sweden, the EU, and other international donors who have criticized the anti-homosexuality bill and the absence of serious anti-corruption efforts. "The standard practice the world over," said Buturo during a December 3 press conference, "is for such views to be communicated to government through well known diplomatic channels. It is never, ever, standard practice in the civilized world for a diplomat to address the press of the country in which he or she is serving on how the host country is handling affairs of its land."

¶8. (U) Responding to allegations that the Ugandan government is "offering lip-service as far as corruption is concerned," Buturo said such comments come from "individuals who either know the truth but choose not to say it or are unaware of

what is going on." Buturo accused foreign diplomats of failing to understand the "complexities of corruption," and said it is unrealistic to expect the Ugandan government to single-handedly address "matters to do with morality." Buturo said Ugandans should remind donors "that there is integrity to be defended and that threats are not the way to go. If one chooses to withdraw their aid, they are free because Ugandans do not want to engage in anal sex. We do not care."

Comment: The Misguided Minister

¶9. (C) Buturo's homosexuality obsession is rapidly undermining any credibility his office might have to oversee Uganda's anti-corruption institutions. Local contacts continue to warn that international condemnation of the anti-homosexuality legislation - and threats to withdraw donor aid if the bill is passed - will further embolden the legislation's supporters by fueling accusations of western cultural imperialism. We do not believe President Museveni shares Minister Buturo's dismissal of donor aid, given that foreign assistance accounts for more than 30% of Uganda's budget and nearly the entirety of Uganda's HIV/AIDS response.

The bill's proponents clearly overlooked the impact of the legislation on Uganda's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. In private discussions with Ugandan officials, we continue to stress the bill's offensive human rights aspects and the negative impact this legislation will have on HIV/AIDS prevention.

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